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The book is a genuine treasure-house of information in the field it illustrates. It is to be hoped that the few items we have been able to present in this short notice will serve to draw the attention of all who feel interest in the history of watchmaking in Geneva.

GEORGE F. KUNZ.

*Personality in German Literature before Luther.* By KUNO FRANCKE, Ph.D., LL.D., Litt.D., Professor of the History of German Culture in Harvard University. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1916. Pp. ix, 221.)

THIS volume, consisting of six chapters originally delivered as lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston (January, 1915), presents a more detailed survey than was possible in the author's *History of German Literature* of the evolution of German letters from the days of Chivalry and Minnesong to the turbulent period of the Reformation. As the title implies, and indeed in conformance with the writer's bent of mind, the book is a contribution to the history of civilization rather than to that of belles-lettres, a study of the growth of personality as mirrored in the literature of the period rather than of the evolution of literary forms.

The trend of the discussion leads toward a criticism and a contradiction of that theory of the contrast between Medievalism and Renaissance which was best expressed by Jacob Burckhard fifty years ago that in the Middle Ages "man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, class, family or corporation—only through some general category. In . . . the Renaissance . . . man became a spiritual individual and recognized himself as such." Professor Francke, while by no means exaggerating the individualistic tendencies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, proceeds to show by an analysis of such personalities as Walther von der Vogelweide and Hartmann von Aue; the mystics Tauler and Suso; Wolfram's Parzival and Gottfried's Tristan; popular song, the drama and the satire, that in Germany at least, individual methods of seeing and expressing had begun to manifest themselves early in the Middle Ages (one hundred years before Dante), and had experienced a steady growth to the days when Hutten and Luther stood out boldly from the dogmas of class and Church, proclaiming the autonomy of the human spirit. Perhaps we might add to this array of early individualists the character of Hagen in the Nibelungenlied. Whoever limned this figure, certainly had the gift which our author lauds in the singers of the folk-songs of setting forth character throbbing with life and viewed with freshness and precision of observation. We heartily approve of the emphasis given to the *Meyer Helmbrecht*, that caustic depiction of the disintegration of chivalric life. Probably few English readers are aware that we have here a great forerunner of the Village Tale (*Dorfgeschichte*).

As in his other writings Professor Francke reveals in this study a rare gift for sympathetic appreciation. This is perhaps best exhibited in the presentation of Walther von der Vogelweide, the Volkslied, and that complex and wayward yet inspiring soul, Ulrich von Hutten. Much insight also is afforded by the comparison of Wolfram's *Parzival* with his sources, betraying a far greater individualism in the treatment of older motives. A similar originality is found in the sermonizing of Berthold von Regensburg and in the pantheistic theology of Master Eckhart. In the characterization of Erasmus as well as in that of Hutten we are glad to see that the Latin writings of these leaders of sixteenth-century thought are treated as an integral part of German letters—a proceeding sometimes lacking even in German histories of literature.

Particularly elucidating is the correlation frequently found on these pages of the architecture, sculpture, and painting with the prose and poetry of the time to reflect the spirit of an epoch. Thus the folk-song and the simple strength of the Adam Krafft sculptures, the mysticism of Suso and of the Cologne school of painters, Dürer's "Knight" and Wolfram's *Parzival* reveal themselves as fruits of the same spirit of striving after a personal interpretation of life. How important it is that these manifestations of German artistic vitality and high accomplishment should be emphasized in a book which seeks to interpret the meaning of this period, appears from a chance remark found in the letters of Professor Charles Eliot Norton written in March, 1902, when lamenting the establishment of a Germanic Museum at Harvard: "If the Germans had ever produced a beautiful work either of painting or sculpture, the prospect [of a Germanic museum] would be less distressing." Such an exclamation emanating from such a pen shows that Professor Francke's work is worth doing.

Perhaps the quotations from the folk-songs would have been more valuable had they been translated, even though only into prose. The average reader can hardly be expected to master the intricacies of Middle High German. And it is precisely in bringing to the consciousness of the reader of average culture (not the specialist) this older and heretofore but little known period of German letters and German art that Professor Francke's great contribution lies. Leslie Stephen could say with justice in his essay, "The Importation of German" (found in *Studies of a Biographer*), that in the eighteenth century Englishmen could not be expected to struggle with the difficulties of the German language, when Germans themselves (quoting Frederick the Great and others) did not feel that they had any literature worth studying. Lately a change has been wrought in this respect even outside of Germany, and Professor Francke by his writings, his lectures, and his able directorship of the Germanic Museum has done much to help us in America to a juster understanding of early German letters and art.

CAMILLO VON KLENZE.